UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1888
8 May 1995

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Special Representative Akashi meets with Croatian authorities and Knin Serbs on tense situation along confrontation line in Croatia.

+ Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is in Moscow to take part in 50th anniversary of end of World War II in Europe.

+ Economic and Social Council concludes resumed organizational session.

+ 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference defers decision on extension of Treaty for 48 hours.

+ Committee on Information members praise work of DPI in projecting true image of United Nations.

+ Judicial system in Rwanda is not functioning due to lack of staff who were massacred or exiled, Rwanda's Attorney-General tells Ninth United Nations Crime Congress in Cairo.

+ President of Angola and leader of UNITA meet in Zambia.

+ Experts from countries ratifying Montreal Protocol meet in Nairobi to consider further adjustments to treaty.

* * *

In the former Yugoslavia, Special Representative Yasushi Akashi has held a number of meetings with both the Croatian authorities and the Knin Serbs concerning the tense situation along the confrontation line in Croatia. A United Nations spokesman in Zaghreb said it was Mr. Akashi's assessment that the diplomatic moves over the weekend, may have bought a little time for the parties to the conflict to consider political options. The spokesman said Mr. Akashi felt that he may be close to an agreement to get the forces to pull

(more)

For information media—not an official record

back from the line. Today there was some positive movement away from the confrontation line in one Sector by the Croatian forces. However, according to the spokesman, in another sector there was a reinforcement of positions.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation was tense over the weekend with over two thousand firing incidents in Sarajevo on Sunday around Dobrinja and Mount Igman. The spokesman said, in the northern Bosnian town of Banja Luka, there was a report of one catholic monastery being blown up. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees , UNHCR has confirmed that one monk was reported to have been killed.

The President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic said Sarajevo had been shelled again and at least 10 people had been killed. In a letter to the Secretary-General, President Izetbegovic said Sarajevo was increasingly being targeted by forbidden weapons. The letter was read for UN correspondents by Ambassador Mohammad Sacirbey. He said things had only become worse in Sarajevo despite assurances by Special Representative Yasushi Akashi.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is in Moscow to take part in the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Earlier today, the Secretary-General met with the President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin, during which they discussed the role of Russia in the world. According to a United Nations spokesman, their talks centred on the situations in the former Yugoslavia, Tajikistan, Georgia and Nagorny-Karabakh. The Secretary-General also thanked President Yeltsin for Russia's support of peace-keeping operations including the latest announcement regarding an offer of Russian peacekeepers to UNAVEM III in Angola. They also discussed arms control and progress toward nuclear disarmament.

* * *

The Economic and Social Council has concluded its resumed organizational session by adopting decisions on the Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS and the operational activities for development segment of its forthcoming substantive session, to be held in Geneva from 26 June to 28 July.

The Council decided that the high-level meeting on the operational activities for development segment of its substantive session would consider, as a principal theme, the implementation by the United Nations system of the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in September 1994. A second issue would be a preliminary exchange on the follow-up to the World Summit for
Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995.

In other action, the Council decided that the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS should comprise 22 elected members. The Council also decided to resume its 1995 organizational session on 1 June, in order to hold elections to the Programme's Board. At

that time, it would also take up the question of the draft decision by the Commission on Sustainable Development to establish an Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

* * *

The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has deferred for 48 hours its decision on the extension of the Treaty. Noting that consensus had not yet been reached on any of the three proposed formulas for extending the Treaty, Conference President Jayantha Dhanapala (Sri Lanka) said that he would continue consultations.

Should consensus not be reached by Wednesday, 10 May, the Conference would decide on extension by a majority vote. On Friday, the Conference had been presented with three drafts. Two draft decisions - one proposed by Canada, the other by Mexico would have the Conference extend the Treaty indefinitely without conditions or extend the Treaty through rolling, 25-year periods. A draft resolution submitted by Indonesia on behalf of the group of Non-Aligned countries, would indefinitely extend the Treaty with conditions.

Consultations were also continuing on whether the voting would be in open plenary or through a secret ballot if a vote on Treaty extension was required.

This morning, the Conference took note of the report of its Main Committee I, which had been reviewing the disarmament and security assurances aspects of the Treaty. Committee Chairman, Isaac E. Ayewah (Nigeria), in explaining the lack of agreement on many key issues, said that the subject matter before the Committee was both difficult and controversial.

* * *

Members of the Committee on Information today praised the work of the Department of Public Information (DPI) in projecting a true image of the United Nations, especially at times when the Organization's objectives were not always correctly presented by the media.

The observer from Ethiopia said that in addition to its peacekeeping, peacemaking and development activities, DPI had a teaching role and should do more than project a positive and unified image of the United Nations. It had a fundamental responsibility of changing the attitudes of people in order to help them live with one another in harmony.

Speaking for a troop-contributing country, the representative of Nepal joined several speakers in stressing that DPI had largely succeeded in meeting the growing demands of peace-keeping activities and that the role of the information component should be expanded.

The representative of Indonesia was one of several speakers who highlighted the importance of realizing a new world information and

communications order to help eliminate existing disparities between the developed and developing countries.

* * *

The judicial system in Rwanda was no longer functioning due to a lack of staff who been either massacred or exiled, that country's Attorney-General of the Supreme Court told the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Cairo. During a special plenary session on technical cooperation projects, Attorney-General Louis-Marie Mugenzi said the genocide last year had resulted in the destruction of lives, property and institutions. He said his Government had a great need for assistance, especially for financial, material and human resources.

Corruption was not limited to third world countries but often had its roots in the entrepreneurial practices in liberal democracies, Antonio di Pietro, Italy's former "Clean Hands" Magistrate, told the Congress. He was addressing a panel of experts on anti-corruption measures. The former judge, who had led recent investigations into corruption in Italy, said, "corruption is like a coin -- it has two sides: one side is the corrupter and the other, the corrupted".

Four other experts addressed the Congress as it began a two-part debate on national experiences and practical measures for combating corruption.

A politically independent prosecutor's office was essential to fight high-level corruption, stressed Shinichi Tsuchiya, Director of the Asian Crime Prevention Foundation and a former Prosecutor in Japan.

Brazil's Minister of Justice, Nelson Azevedo Jobim, said the impeachment of the country's former President had been made possible by a number of mechanisms in place to fight corruption, including the empowerment of the Parliament to suspend executive authority and investigate presidential activities and finances. A free press and independent judicial authority were other essential elements in the fight, he said.

The other panelists making introductory statements were M. Cherif Bassiouni, President of the International Association of Penal Law and President of the Siracusa Institute for Higher Criminological Studies; and Senator Romul Vonica, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Romania.

* * *

President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola and Dr. Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) met in Lusaka, Zambia on Saturday, according to a UN spokesman. The two Angolan leaders discussed substantive aspects of the situation in the country, the idea of a Government of national reconciliation and Dr. Savimbi's role in the process, the spokesman said. Meanwhile, it was anticipated that the first deployment of peace-keeping troops under UNAVEM III would be a battalion from Uruguay, scheduled for middle of this month.

(more)

* * *

Over 300 experts from countries which have ratified the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, today began a week-long meeting at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in Nairobi. The government experts are considering possible further amendments and adjustments to the international treaty widely viewed as a model for international cooperation in environmental issues.

The Open-ended Working Group of the Parties has before it a series of assessment reports prepared last year by expert panels coordinated by UNEP. The Assessment Reports were prepared by over 700 experts in the scientific, legal and environmental fields from 46 countries and cover the areas of science, environmental effects, technology and economics, among others.

* *** *